

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for validating gaming vouchers printed by an electronic
5 gaming machine, comprising the steps of:

receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable
computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a
voucher printed by an electronic gaming machine;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request
10 from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said
remote wireless interface connected to a central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless
interface to the central network computer;

retrieving a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said
15 voucher identification information;

confirming, based on payment information in said voucher record, that
the corresponding voucher has not yet been paid;

updating said voucher record to indicate that the voucher has been
paid;

20 transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out
approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable

computer device if said voucher record was found and not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if either said voucher record was not found or else the voucher was already paid; and

displaying an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

reading a pay-out amount from said voucher record;

transmitting, along with said voucher pay-out approval indication, said pay-out amount from the central network computer to said portable computer device via said remote transmitter; and

displaying said pay-out amount at said portable computer device.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting from an electronic gaming machine, when the voucher is initially printed out, said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount to said central network computer; and

creating and storing a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

4. The method of claim 3, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the voucher was initially printed out.

5 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said wireless, portable computer device comprises a personal digital assistant.

6. A system for validating gaming vouchers printed by an electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

10 a wireless, portable computer device, said wireless, portable computer device comprising a display, a data input interface, and a radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with said radio transceiver;

15 a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface, said central computer programmed with a voucher verification program; and

a voucher database connected to said central computer;

20 wherein said voucher verification program receives voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable computer device via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher record in said voucher database, confirms that the voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect that the voucher has

been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication to said wireless, portable computer device; and

5 wherein said wireless, portable computer device receives voucher validation request information through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on-screen in response to receiving them from said central computer.

10 7. The system of claim 6, wherein said voucher verification program reads a pay-out amount from said voucher record, if unpaid, and sends, via said wireless interface, said pay-out amount to said portable computer device along with said voucher pay-out approval indication; and

15 wherein said wireless, portable computer device displays said pay-out amount at said portable computer device.

20 8. The system of claim 6, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines, wherein an electronic gaming machine transmits voucher identification information and pay-out amount to said central

computer via said gaming machine interface each time a voucher is printed out from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer creates and stores a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

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9. The system of claim 8, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the voucher was initially printed out.

10. The system of claim 6, wherein said wireless, portable computer device comprises a personal digital assistant.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein said data input interface of said personal digital assistant comprises a keyboard or keypad.

12. The system of claim 10, wherein said data input interface of said personal digital assistant comprises a touchscreen or stylus.

13. A method for on-line or off-line validation of gaming vouchers printed by an electronic gaming machine, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving voucher identification information at a wireless, portable computer device, said voucher identification information corresponding to a voucher printed by an electronic gaming machine;

transmitting, over a wireless connection, a voucher validation request from the wireless, portable computer device to a remote wireless interface, said remote wireless interface connected to a central network computer;

conveying the voucher validation request from the remote wireless interface to the central network computer;

attempting to retrieve a voucher record in a voucher database based upon said voucher identification information;

confirming, if said voucher record was retrieved, that the corresponding voucher has not yet been paid based on payment information in said voucher record, and transmitting, via said remote wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval from said central network computer to a said wireless, portable computer device if said voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval if said voucher record was already paid;

displaying, if said voucher record was retrieved, an indication of said voucher pay-out approval or voucher pay-out disapproval on-screen at said wireless, portable computer device;

transmitting, if said voucher record could not be retrieved, a voucher record unavailable indication from said central network computer, via said remote wireless interface, to said wireless, portable computer device;

receiving said voucher record unavailable indication at said wireless, portable computer device and, in response thereto, displaying an off-line error message;

receiving a voucher amount at said wireless, remote computer device after displaying said off-line error message;

transmitting said voucher amount and said voucher identification information, via said wireless interface, to said central network computer from said wireless, portable computer device; and

preparing a voucher database reconciliation record at said central network computer for updating said voucher database at a subsequent time to reflect that the voucher has been paid.

14. The method of claim 13, further comprising the step of, in connection with transmitting said voucher pay-out approval to said wireless, portable computer device, updating said voucher record to indicate that the voucher has been paid,

15. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

reading a pay-out amount from said voucher record;

transmitting, along with said voucher pay-out approval indication, said pay-out amount from the central network computer to said portable computer

5 device via said remote transmitter; and

displaying said pay-out amount at said portable computer device.

16. The method of claim 13, further comprising the steps of:

transmitting from an electronic gaming machine, when the voucher is initially printed out, said voucher identification information and the pay-out amount to said central network computer; and

creating and storing a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said voucher identification information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the voucher was initially printed out.

18. The method of claim 13, wherein said wireless, portable computer device comprises a personal digital assistant.

19. A system for validating gaming vouchers printed by an electronic gaming machine, the system comprising:

a plurality of wireless, portable computer devices, each of said wireless, portable computer devices comprising a display, a data input interface, and a
5 radio transceiver;

a remote wireless interface capable of communicating with the radio transceivers of said wireless, portable computer devices and distinguishing transmissions therefrom;

a central computer connected to said remote wireless interface, said
10 central computer programmed with a voucher verification program; and

a voucher database connected to said central computer;

wherein said voucher verification program receives voucher validation requests electronically from said wireless, portable computer devices via said remote wireless interface, confirms the existence of a corresponding voucher
15 record in said voucher database for each received voucher validation request, confirms that the voucher has not yet been paid, updates the voucher record, if unpaid, to reflect that the voucher has been paid, and sends, via said wireless interface, a voucher pay-out approval indication to the wireless, portable computer device originally sending the voucher validation request if said
20 voucher was not yet paid, or else a voucher pay-out disapproval indication; and

wherein each wireless, portable computer device originally transmitting a voucher validation request receives the voucher validation request information through its data input interface, transmits voucher validation requests to said central computer via its radio transceiver, and displays voucher pay-out approval and disapproval indications on-screen in response to receiving them from said central computer.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein said voucher verification program reads a pay-out amount from the corresponding voucher record, if unpaid, and sends, via said wireless interface, said pay-out amount to the requesting portable computer device along with said voucher pay-out approval indication; and

wherein the wireless, portable computer device receiving said pay-out amount displays it.

21. The system of claim 19, further comprising a gaming machine interface connected between said central computer and one or more electronic gaming machines, wherein an electronic gaming machine transmits voucher identification information and pay-out amount to said central computer via said gaming machine interface each time a voucher is printed out from the electronic gaming machine, and wherein said central computer

creates and stores a voucher record in said voucher database in response to said voucher identification information.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein said voucher identification
5 information comprises a machine identifier and a time stamp indicating a time at which the voucher was initially printed out.

23. The system of claim 19, wherein each of said wireless, portable
computer devices comprises a personal digital assistant.

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